availability of drinking water is ensured at stations by arranging water through private water tankers. Even water special trains are run in areas facing heavy shortage of water. Water coolers, mobile water trollies, matkas are arranged for better availability of water to the passengers. Many Non-Government Organisations also supplement water supply to passengers. In addition, packaged drinking water/natural mineral water is made available for sale through static as well as mobile catering/vending units.

Reconstruction of outlived rail bridges/culverts

†1409. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it is unsafe to operate trains on a number of such rail bridges/culverts as these have outlived their normal life;

(b) if so, the scheme of Government to reconstruct such bridges/ culverts; and

(c) the number of such rail bridges/culverts which need immediate attention from safety point of view?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The life of the bridge is not based on its age but on physical condition as ascertained by inspections. Railways have a well laid down system of multi-tier annual inspection of bridges. Those bridges which require repair/rehabilitation are taken up on a programmed basis. Bridges requiring immediate attention are taken up on priority and are classified as Distressed Bridges. If required, speed restrictions are imposed till repairs are carried out. Distressed bridges are not unsafe for train operations. There are 122 distressed bridges as on 01-04-2005 out of which 84 are targeted for repair/rehabilitation during the 2005-06.

New catering policy

†1410. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to formulate a New Catering Policy;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.